

Miss Lou gets her Order

By EDDIE GRANT

Jamaican cultural treasure Louise (Miss Lou) Bennett-Coverley, O.J., D.Lit., MBE was recently presented with Jamaica's Order of Merit, the country's third highest award.

The announcement of the award was made by Jamaica's Governor General Sir Howard Cooke during Jamaica's Independence Day celebration in August, but because of husband Eric Coverley's ill health, Miss Lou couldn't attend the National Heroes' Day Award presentation ceremony held at Kings House, Jamaica in October.

To honour her groundbreaking involvement in Jamaica's arts and culture for more than three decades, Arts and Culture Jamaica and the Consulate General of Jamaica hosted a reception last Tuesday, when the award was presented.

In his welcome and opening remarks to the large gathering, which included several Caribbean nationals and members of the Consular Corps, Consul General Stewart Stephenson described Miss Lou as a national icon. "Her work has been extended through poetry, story and songs," he said, adding that she was being

honoured for her invaluable and tremendous contributions to the development of Jamaica's folklore and theatre.

Paula de Ronde, president of Arts and Culture Jamaica, said that when she was approached by the Consul General to host the reception and tribute, it was a double pleasure for her as Miss Lou is also a patron of that organization.

De Ronde noted that Canada has recently given recognition to Nelson Mandela by making him an Honorary Citizen, making him the first living person

to be so honoured. "I see no reason why our Miss Lou cannot be (Jamaica's) first living National Hero. All of our National heroes are dead, we want her to be honoured while she is here with us," she said to loud cheers from the audience.

Making the presentation to Miss Lou was Raymond Wolfe, Jamaica's High Commissioner to Canada.

"I won't try to find any cliché or superlatives to describe the lady, she is a great Jamaican... may her work live on forever," Wolfe said.

In her usual jovial manner, Miss Lou thanked all those responsible for the honour bestowed on her and those who hosted the reception.



Jamaica's High Commissioner to Canada, RAYMOND WOLFE, presents MISS LOU with that country's Order of Merit, while Jamaica's Consul General at Toronto, STEWART STEPHENSON looks on.

Photo by EDDIE GRANT

Embarrassed by my Jamaican Consulate

THE EDITOR, Ma'am

I am a Jamaican living in the United States and as a result of my patriotism to my country I have never considered becoming a citizen of the US. I, however, came to my senses recently, when I had to take my children home for the summer holiday. It was necessary for me to acquire a passport at the time. I was treated in the most horrible manner by my fellow Jamaicans at the consulate.

I always thought that the consulate was one place in a foreign country that Jamaicans would feel at home. I noticed, however, that the minute you needed a passport you were treated like a second class citizen.

I have seen foreigners, on the other hand who needed visas to enter my country, treated with respect and even courtesy, something I never got. I was

disgusted, as this was not only my experience but the experience of many other Jamaicans I spoke with.

I felt so ashamed, as my husband who is a citizen of the US was with me. I had the need to accompany him to the US embassy in Kingston and he was given red carpet treatment, and I being his wife was treated the same.

Someone needs to train the staff we have representing us abroad! Many of us are educated, career individuals who wouldn't hire these people if they were working for free! Please we need an investigation on this matter.

I am, etc..
JACQUELINE LAURAY
jlauray@yahoo.com
New Haven, CT, USA
Via Go-Jamaica